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HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

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THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

VERNON, CONNECTICUT.

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ALLYN STANLEY KELLOGG.

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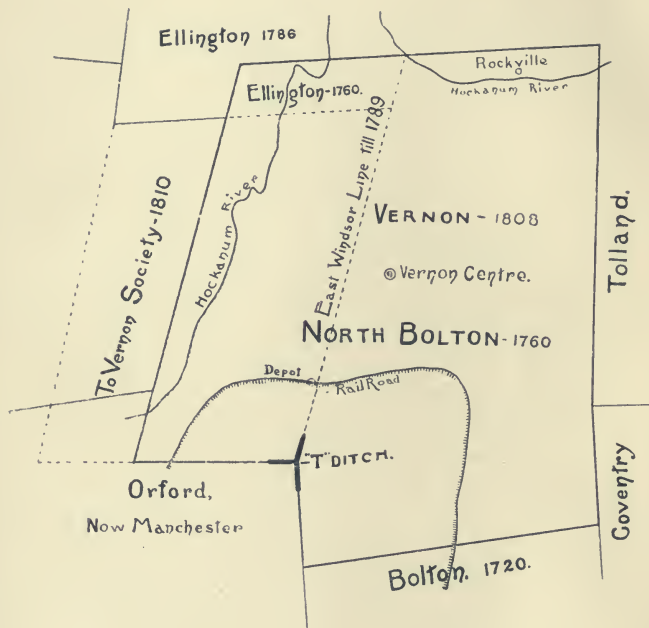




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# THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

IN

VERNON, CONNECTICUT.

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AN HISTORICAL ADDRESS

BY

ALLYN STANLEY KELLOGG.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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The following address, relating to the formation and early history of the Church of Christ in Vernon, Connecticut, was prepared at the solicitation of its pastor, by Allyn S. Kellogg, and delivered by him at the church on Sunday, January 22d, 1888.

As it embraced also some account of the daughter churches in Rockville, Mr. Kellogg was asked to repeat the address in that city. Ill health prevented its public delivery; and in its revised form it is now published as of interest to the churches alike of Vernon and Rockville.

NEWTONVILLE, MASS.

April, 1894.

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ALLYN STANLEY KELLOGG, son of Allyn and Eliza White Kellogg, was born in Vernon, October 15th, 1824. He was for many years Clerk of the Church, and was particularly interested in all things relating to its formation and early history.

He died at Newtonville, Massachusetts, April 3d, 1893.





## ADDRESS.

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A year or two ago, the elder of the Congregational churches then existing in Rockville, celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its organization. In his historical discourse on that occasion, the pastor recounted the steps by which thirty-five members of the original church in Vernon, with "tender expressions of love and respect for the parent church," and with the full approval of their remaining brethren, separated themselves from its fellowship. They left the home in which they had been richly blessed, and in which some of them had been nurtured from their youth, that they, with others, might take up the duty to which they were providentially called; of establishing Christian institutions in the Northern part of the town.

I am requested to speak of those earlier religious institutions in Vernon, from which those in Rockville sprung. There is time



only to recite the principal facts, preserved in the public records, relating to the origin and formation of the First Church and Society in Vernon, and to sketch briefly the history of that church and society, for the three-quarters of a century before a second church was formed.

These facts are a part of Rockville's history. As early, at least, as 1739, the power of this wild stream had been brought into use, in a saw-mill, a grist-mill, and in iron works; and near to these there were dwelling-houses. And so, for almost a hundred years before a church was established here, there were people here who were united in all civil and ecclesiastical relations with those who lived South of this valley. They had the same religious teachers. They took part in the earliest efforts made to secure the preaching of the gospel within this town. They helped to found the church in Vernon. And it was in that church, that most of the founders of the first church in Rockville received strength for their undertaking.

The ecclesiastical history of Vernon properly begins with the settlement of the town of Bolton, in which the larger part of Vernon

was then included. The General Assembly authorized the settlement of this tract of land in May, 1718, under the direction of a committee appointed for that purpose. This committee made fifty allotments for settlers, one of which was expressly "designed for a minister's lot."

In October, 1720, "the Governour, Council, and Representatives, in General Court assembled," incorporated the town by the name of Bolton. "And, for the setting up and maintaining the worship of God there," as the purpose is expressed in the enactment, a tax was laid upon "all the lots in said town, but that laid out for the minister." This tax was continued for several years, until it amounted in the whole to thirteen pounds ten shillings on each allotment; a sum much greater for those days than would now be the forty-five dollars by which we should express it in federal money.

A meeting-house was built two or three years after the town was incorporated. In May, 1725, when the town had increased to more than thirty families, liberty was granted to the people "to imbody in church estate,"

with liberty "to call and settle an orthodox minister among them, with the approbation of the neighboring churches." In October, of the same year, a church was formed, and the Reverend Thomas White was ordained its pastor.

All these acts affected alike the proprietors and the inhabitants of all parts of the town. Mr. White was for thirty-five years the minister of the whole town. The people who lived in the North part of Bolton shared in the expense of supporting him, and, so far as was practicable, attended upon his ministrations. The church communicants dwelling there were members of the Church of Christ in Bolton.

As the families in the Northern part of the town increased in number, the difficulty of attending public worship was so great that, as early as 1748, the people there "obtained liberty from the church, of having the word of God preached amongst themselves, for the winter season," and in that year the town released them from half their minister's rate. The next year, in 1749, they asked that such winter privileges be confirmed to them by the

legislature, saying, "That Providence hath cast our habitations at a great distance from the place of publick worship in said town, by reason of which we are not capable of attending said worship in the town, especially in the winter season, some of us living seven miles from the meeting-house, and the most of us above five."

Their prayer was granted. Liberty was given them "to hire an orthodox approved minister, or candidate for the ministry, to preach among themselves from the last of October to the first of May, annually, and that during that time, . . . if they shall procure preaching of the Gospel among them, they shall be exempted from payment of ministerial charges in the parish to which they belong."

This was the beginning of a separation, in ecclesiastical matters, from the older part of the town. In the final petition for a new society, in 1760, the inhabitants of this part of Bolton refer to this privilege of meeting by themselves, for worship, for about ten or a dozen years past, and say, "which privilege

we have carefully improved." There is found no other evidence to this effect than their own sufficient testimony. This winter parish was doubtless organized according to law, having a committee and collector, and a clerk to record its proceedings. But no local record or tradition has preserved even the fact that such separate religious worship was ever maintained.

The eighteen persons who petitioned the General Assembly for winter privileges, in 1749, describe themselves as "inhabitants of the North end of Bolton, viz., inhabiting North of a due East line drawn from the Ditch commonly called the T Ditch, cross said town." This "T Ditch" is often referred to.\* It was simply the legal landmark for town boundaries, at the East end of the line between the towns of Hartford and Windsor. Its arms marked the direction of the lines between those towns and the town of Bolton. The place is now the Northeast corner of the town of Manchester. North of this line, the line between Windsor and Bolton was parallel with the West

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\* See map.



line of the present town of Vernon. It ran less than a quarter of a mile West of the site of the church now standing at Vernon Centre, and met the North line of Bolton at the place where West Street, in Rockville, now enters the town of Ellington. More than one-third of the town of Vernon lies West of that line, and was then chiefly in the Second Society in Windsor, which included more than the present towns of South Windsor and East Windsor. The meeting-house of this society was in the principal street near the river, nearly a mile and a half North of the present church in South Windsor. The people living in the Eastern part of this society, in the district called Hockanum, were, it was said, at a distance of eight or nine miles, "as the roads go," from the public worship they supported. As will appear, the ecclesiastical relations of this territory were the source of the principal difficulties encountered in procuring the formation of a new society.

The next year after the winter privileges were granted to a part of Bolton, the people there took the first step towards becoming



a separate ecclesiastical society. The Colony records show that, in May, 1750, "Benjamin Stoughton and others, inhabitants living on a certain tract of land in the Southeast part of the town of Windsor," prayed "to be made a distinct ecclesiastical society, with certain limits." At the same time, "Isaac Jones, Moses Thrall, and others, inhabitants living part of them in the town of Bolton, and part of them living in said Windsor," prayed "to be a distinct ecclesiastical society, with certain other limits." Neither of these petitions is preserved; but it is evident that they conflicted with each other, each of them including the district of Hockanum within the limits it proposed. Without this district, both Wapping, where the former petitioners lived, and the North part of Bolton, were too small to constitute a society. The people in Hockanum generally desired to unite with the people in Bolton. But it seems probable that the movement to secure such a union was hastened by the action of the petitioners in Wapping.

Both petitions were referred to the same

committee, which reported in each case, in the following year, that the people were but few, and a new society was not necessary at present. The town of Bolton had voted to oppose the petition from the North end of that town.

In May, 1754, the application for a new society was repeated; one that should include a district about two miles in width, lying in Windsor. This petition was negatived, without referring it to a committee.

Three years later, in May, 1757, the matter came before the General Assembly in a new form. In brief, Governor Roger Wolcott and other principal inhabitants of the Second Society in Windsor, and many of the principal inhabitants of the town of Bolton, headed a petition asking "that another distinct ecclesiastical society may be formed out of Windsor and Bolton, or out of Windsor, with such bounds and limits as your Honours' committee sent to view the land judge reasonable and just." This readiness to accept what was reasonable and just, in the view of judicious men, shows the spirit of the whole

paper; although it is evident that most of the signers favored the plan for forming a new society from Bolton and Windsor. The petitioners acknowledge that by reason of the different sentiments among them, "contentions have already arose to a considerable degree, which are likely to increase and continue, to the disturbing of the peace of Societies, to the disadvantage of religion, by breaking that love and friendship that ought to be in every community."

The one hundred and eight petitioners included the people in the North part of Bolton, and most of those living near them in Windsor. But Wapping still chose a course of separate action, and twenty-six petitioners asked, expressly, for a new society that should include "Wapping and Hocanum, with the other lands in the Southeast part of Windsor." The papers in this case are numerous, and show that the whole subject was warmly discussed. The Assembly declined to appoint the committee asked for; perhaps in despair of harmonizing the various conflicting interests.

Another three years passed before it seemed best to ask again, and for the fourth time, for a new society. In May, 1760, forty-four inhabitants of the North part of Bolton, and of the East part of the Second Society in Windsor, presented their memorial to the General Assembly. They say, "Our difficulties are so extreme that we are obliged to seek relief." They carefully state these difficulties; their great distance from their places of divine worship, with their "roads exceeding rough and bad traveling." And even in regard to their meeting separately in winter, they say, "Yet there is a new difficulty. We are so increased that no dwelling-house will receive or hold us with any tolerable comfort. And hoping that we shall still much more increase, both in number and estate, and that the smiles of Divine Providence will still continue with us, it gives us great hopes of success." They ask, therefore, to be made a distinct ecclesiastical society, with the bounds which they describe, and proceed to show that the societies from which they would be taken would be well able to do without them.



Time has made their necessities evident to their neighbors, and has doubtless allayed the excitements of earlier years. There is now no counter petition from Wapping, and the town of Bolton, which had hitherto opposed a division by any line farther South than the "T Ditch," now votes, "That the upper end of this town be set off agreeable to the bounds of the memorial now sent to the General Assembly."

The Assembly appointed Messrs. Zebulon West, of Tolland, and Silas Long and Jonathan Porter, of Coventry, a committee to view the situation and circumstances of the proposed new society, and to report the facts, with their opinion thereon, to the Assembly, in October next. This committee reported, in October, 1760, that they "find that within the limits prayed for, there are dwelling upwards of sixty families;" and recounting the facts of the situation, they say, "Wherefore we are of opinion that it is very needful that there should be made a distinct ecclesiastical society, and most fitting and best that the bounds and limits be as prayed for."



The General Assembly accepted this report of the committee, and Resolved and Enacted that the inhabitants living within the limits and bounds mentioned, "be made into a distinct Ecclesiastical Society, by the name of the Society of North Bolton."

The territory of North Bolton Society was the same as that of the present town of Vernon. It was taken from four different ecclesiastical societies. Much the largest part of it was taken from Bolton, the Southern boundary being a line running nearly East, from a point one mile South of the "T Ditch." The inhabitants of this section numbered a little less than three hundred. The number living in that part of the society which was in the town of Windsor was perhaps one hundred. This Windsor part was a little more than a mile and a half in width, and had belonged to three societies which all bounded on the town of Bolton. At the North end, was a tract nearly half a mile in width, on which were living two families, which was in Ellington Society. South of this was a strip half as wide, having no inhabitants, that was in the



North Society of Windsor, or Scantic Parish, which had been formed in 1752. The remainder of this tract was in the Second Society of Windsor. All this territory lying in Windsor became a part of East Windsor, when that town was incorporated in 1768. In May, 1789, it was annexed to the town of Bolton.

Thus far the course of events has been traced directly from the original public records and documents. But from this point, from the moment the Society was given existence, the most important sources of history are wanting. The Society records, a complete record of its acts for one hundred and fifteen years, and all papers in the custody of the clerk, were destroyed by fire, in 1876. A few facts are preserved in the accounts and papers of the Society Committee, for a part of this period, and in scanty notes taken by me from the records, many years before they were lost.

The powers granted to the inhabitants of the new Society were soon called into action by a writ issued by Thomas Pitkin, Justice of the Peace, commanding John Dart, Constable,

to warn a Society meeting, to be held at the dwelling-house of David Allis, on Wednesday, November 12, 1760, at one o'clock, P.M. This first meeting of the Society was organized by the choice of Isaac Jones as Moderator. He was the oldest member of the Society, then seventy years of age, and his name stands first on all the petitions from the North part of Bolton, and on the record of original members of the church formed there. John Chapman was chosen Clerk and Treasurer, Titus Olcott, Moses Thrall and Aaron Strong Society Committee, and John Paine Collector. It was voted, "That the present Committee shall invite Mr. Bulkley Olcott to preach with us upon probation." It was also voted, "To hold the Sabbath day meeting at David Allis's dwelling-house, till the first of May next." These two votes relate to the subjects that chiefly occupied their attention for some years; the settling of a minister, and the providing of a place for public worship.

Plans for building a meeting-house were at once formed. On the 28th of November, a little more than two weeks after the first meet-

ing, it was voted, "To build a Meeting-house, to be 50 by 40 feet, with 24-foot posts." Two months later, on the 27th of January, 1761, it was voted to apply to the County Court for a committee "to affix a place to build a meeting-house." This was in the regular course of procedure then required by law, and still permitted by law. The Court records, at Hartford, show that "Zebulon West, of Tolland, Esqr., and Messrs. Jonathan Porter, of Coventry, and Solomon Gilman, of Hartford," were appointed a committee for the purpose stated. This committee met on the 25th of February, and fixed upon a place "on the southward part of land belonging to Mr. Samuel Bartlett, near to the highway that leadeth westward from Mr. David Ellis's." Hardly a fortnight later, March 10, the Society voted to build at the place selected by the committee.

Apparently, the people expected to enter at once upon the work of building. But no strange thing happened when there arose strong objection to the location of the meeting-house; and on the 15th of May, before the report of the committee was acted upon

by the Court, it was voted to apply to the County Court for another committee "to affix a place for building." But at the June term, the Court accepted and approved the report of its committee, and established the place therein mentioned, to be the place for building the meeting-house. It was now not lawful to build elsewhere. But so far was this decree from disposing of the question, that several months later, on the 23rd of September, the Society voted to apply to the General Assembly for a committee to affix a place to build a meeting-house. If such application was made, the request was refused. The place established by the Court must have been accepted, at length, and on the last day of 1761, more than a year after the first vote to build, it was voted, "that the meeting-house be 46 by 36 feet, with 22-foot posts;" a somewhat smaller house than was at first proposed. John Chapman, David Allis and Seth King were appointed a building committee.

The place where this house was erected is about half a mile East of the present meeting-house at Vernon Centre, on the top of the

hill still known to some as the "Old Meeting-House Hill." It was usual to choose an elevated place for a house of divine worship. This house stood in the most sightly place near the centre of the Society. When first built, it could be reached only from the East and the West, by the highway already mentioned. Several years later, highways were opened leading to it from the North and from the South. There were no newspapers in those days; and what other sites were proposed, and for a time preferred, we cannot now reasonably conjecture.

The meeting-house was raised on the 6th of May, 1762, and was first used for divine worship on the 20th of June following. It could then have been little more than a shelter for the congregation. Slow progress was made in fitting the building for use; for it was more than two years and a half after it was raised, December 13, 1764, when the Society voted to accept the account of the committee for building. The house was then far from being completed. In 1768, it was voted that the committee "provide a lock and key, and bolts,



to fasten up the meeting-house." Pews were built in 1770. Probably before that time the house had been furnished only with benches. The house was not plastered until 1774, twelve years after it was first occupied for public worship.

This slow progress in building was not due to indifference, or to fitful zeal. But the people were poor, and money was scarce, to a degree that can now hardly be understood. It was a heavy burden for a people of such slender means, to bear the expense of building a house of worship, and of settling a minister. They endured well the hardships of those times. There was a like slow progress in finishing the meeting-houses erected a few years earlier, in the neighboring societies of Tolland and East Windsor; parishes stronger than this in numbers and in wealth.\*

This meeting-house was of the prevailing style of architecture for country churches; a plain four-sided building, without a steeple. It fronted the highway on the South by one

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\* Waldo's History of Tolland, p. 27, 1755-1760. Stiles's History of Windsor, pp. 298, 310. 1755, 1759, 1767, 1769.



of its longer sides, having doors, also, in the East and West ends. It was not dwarfed by the horse-sheds and the school-house, the only buildings erected near it; and standing on elevated ground, and for a long time surrounded by the original forest, it had a dignity which it were vain to seek in the structure that has stood for sixty years, having substantially the same frame,—the East wing of the old Frank Factory, in Rockville. (Built in 1831 and 1832. Cogswell, p. 15).

The interior of the house was arranged, also, after the almost universal fashion; with nearly square pews having straight-backed seats; with galleries on three sides, and, high above the stairs, in each front corner, a negro pew.

The pulpit, on the North side, was considerably elevated above the pews; and over this was the sounding-board. This was a structure of considerable size, and wrought into some striking form, of which we cannot now obtain an exact description. It was fastened to the wall, above the pulpit, and was also suspended from the ceiling, by an apparently slender rod.

This sounding-board was considered an indispensable aid to hearing. It was certainly a never-failing source of wonder and of awe to successive generations of children in the congregation. All persons who have attempted to describe it have made statements similar to that of the late Rev. Dr. Perrin, who said but a few months before his death, that in his childhood he used to look up to it with wonder, and ask himself, — "What if it should fall?"

The other work laid upon the Society in its earliest years, was that of settling a minister. It does not appear that during the first year any one had preached there as a candidate for settlement. At the end of that year, at the annual meeting held in November, 1761, it was voted, "to hire a candidate to preach the gospel to us the year ensuing." On the 10th of March following, it was voted, "to send to the Association for advice, in order for calling a candidate upon probation." This was the usage of the times, continued till a much later date, to apply to the Moderator of the local Association, to recommend some one as a candidate.

Only three Sabbaths passed after the above vote, before the people were ready to take the first step towards settling a minister. On the 29th of March, 1762, it was voted, "to call Mr. Ebenezer Kellogg upon probation, in order for settlement." After a trial of three months, on the first of July, it was "Voted, to call Mr. Ebenezer Kellogg to settle in the work of the ministry in said Society." It was voted to give him as a salary, £55 the first year, and so to rise by £1 yearly, to £65; and also to give him £100 settlement at the end of one year after his ordination, and £50 at the end of the next year. On the 9th of September the vote was changed, naming a salary of £60 the first year, to increase by £1 yearly, until it reached £70. One month later, it was voted "to accept Mr. Ebenezer Kellogg's answer, dated October 7, 1762." The salary remained unchanged through Mr. Kellogg's life. After the adoption of the federal currency, the sum was expressed by \$233.33, instead of £70.

All these preliminary measures were taken by the Society alone, there being as yet no

organized church to take part in them. The church records contain no account of the formation of the church, except a single line, written by Deacon Francis King, as late as 1818; "The Church in Vernon was formed October, 1762." This doubtless rests on the authority of a paper written and signed by the first pastor, and dated January 3, 1815, in which he says, "Sometime in October, in the year 1762, a Church was gathered and embodied in said North Bolton Society." But there is good reason for supposing that while the thirty-five original members of the church had been dismissed from the church in Bolton, as early as October, and then made such arrangements for organization as were needful, they were not "embodied into a church state," to use the language of those times, until the Council met, on the 24th of November, to ordain the candidate called by the Society. This is directly inferred from the fact that the call of the Church, and the candidate's acceptance of the call, was upon that day. This fact appears by the following paper, the earliest church paper on file: —

Att a meeting of the Church of Christ in North Bolton, Novbr 24th A Dom. 1762, att the house of Mr. John Chapman in s<sup>d</sup> North Bolton ;

It is unanimously agreed by this Church that nothing shall be deemed a Vote or Act of the Church wherein there is not the explicit consent or agreement both of the Pastor and of the major part of the brethren of the Church present at the meeting.

Voted also by this Church to give M.<sup>r</sup> Ebenezer Kellog a Call to settle with us in the work of the Gospel Ministry.

Isaac Jones,  
Titus Olcott,  
John Chapman,  
Isaac Brunson,  
Charles King,  
David Allis,  
Seth King,  
Thomas Darte,  
Asahel Root,  
Thomas Chapman,  
Jabez Rogers,  
Solomon Loomis,  
Nathan Messenger,  
Caleb Talcott.

I concur w<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Article above,  
relating to Chh Discipline,  
& also accept of y<sup>e</sup> Call of  
afrs<sup>d</sup> Chh.  
Eben<sup>r</sup> Kellogg.

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(This paper was signed by all the original male members of the Church but two; Hezekiah King and Stephen Payne, who were probably unable to be present at that meeting.)



These votes were the first church acts; taken, doubtless, immediately after the Council had declared these disciples to be duly constituted a Church of Christ, and before it proceeded to examine the candidate who was to be ordained. He was to be constituted the pastor of that Church; and it was not in order to proceed to his ordination until the *Church* had called him to be its minister, and he had accepted that call.

There is no record of this ordination, and the most diligent inquiry has failed to discover any facts respecting it; the name of the preacher, or of others who took part in the exercises. The Council was the North Association of Hartford County, which included churches so distant as those of Stafford on the one hand, and Farmington and Canton on the other. Probably most of the Churches not remote from that place were represented in this Council.

The Church then formed was known as the "Second Church of Christ in Bolton," until the town of Vernon was incorporated, in October, 1808, when the Church and the Society took the name of the town.



The ministry of the first pastor continued till his death, in 1817, nearly fifty-five years from the time of his ordination. Yet the history of the Church and Society during this long period,—a period that covered all the great events of our early national history,—presents but few facts that need here be mentioned. The principal fact is one shown by the record of church communicants; that there were almost yearly additions to the membership, and that but few years passed without receiving some upon profession of their faith. Taking into account the changes by death and removal, the resident church members seem to have increased in quite as great a ratio as the population of the Society, which somewhat more than doubled during this period.

The record of business transacted by the Church is valuable chiefly for its brevity, as showing an absence of contentions, and but few occasions for church discipline. The only church acts for more than thirty years, that seem worthy of record, were of five different dates, in the choice of deacons.

The spirit in which the pastor labored, and the events of his ministry which he thought most worthy of mention, may best be learned from his own words, spoken to his people in 1812, in his review of fifty years of labor among them. His text was 1 Thessalonians, 2: 19. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming?" Of his own ministry and its results, he said:

"I was ordained pastor over the church and congregation in this place, November the 24th day, in the year of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, 1762, and the 24th day of the present month completed the term of fifty years. Through which period of time, I have been detained from attending on public worship, and preaching on the Lord's day, by reason of infirmity (if I recollect right), not more than twelve Sabbaths. And having obtained help of God, I continue to this day, testifying unto you, both aged and in young life, the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of your souls.

“I am sensible I have labored among you in much weakness, and have reason to exclaim, in the words of the prophet, ‘My leanness!’ ‘My leanness!’ However, I am not conscious of having knowingly withholden from you the whole counsel of God, nor neglected to teach and inculcate upon you the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion, as they are revealed in the gospel of the Savior.

“The success of my ministerial labors among you, I know not; God knoweth; but hope that I have not altogether labored in vain, and been of no service to you on spiritual accounts. It hath pleased God, in the course of my ministry among you, to favour his people with three or four seasons of the awakening influences of his Holy Spirit, whereby an unusual attention was given to the word of his grace; several put upon this interesting inquiry, what they should do to be saved; some few hopefully converted to God; and it was a refreshing time to His saints. These seasons of uncommon awakening were in and about the years 1772, 1782, 1800 and 1809.

“ At other times, some few in almost every year since my ministry have felt so much of the importance of religion and spiritual concerns as induced them to publickly profess it, and join to the Church.

“ The number who have become members of this Church, by solemnly covenanting with God and His people, since my ministry, is 339. And the number of those who have been dedicated to God in baptism is 825 ; 28 of whom were adult persons. The deaths which have taken place since I was settled here are about 389, and the marriages, 235.

“ Time in its nature is fleeting. It bears all the living along with it. One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh. It has been so from the beginning of time, and it will continue to be so till time shall end. Some of us, who yet are of the number of the living, are far advanced in life, and according to the course of nature must expect shortly to be numbered with the great congregation of the dead.

“ As to myself, the time of my departure is near at hand. And in view and prospect of

that solemn day, I am supported with a believing hope that I trust in Christ as my all-sufficient Savior, and that I have not labored altogether in vain among you; but through the rich and free grace of God in Christ Jesus, have had some souls given me as seals of my ministry, and who will be to me a crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Not one of the thirty-five original members of the Church who first received him as their pastor, was present to listen to these words. By death, and by removal from the place, all had long since passed from his pastoral care.

Mr. Kellogg continued to preach pretty regularly for about four years after the close of his half century of ministerial service, except for a time in 1815. In that year, there was another season of uncommon awakening, more fruitful of manifest results than any that had preceded it. This was principally in connection with the labors of Rev. Hervey Talcott and Rev. Cornelius B. Everest.

The infirmities of age finally withdrew him from pulpit labors early in the year 1817.



He died on the 3d of September, 1817, in the 81st year of his age, and in the 55th year of his ministry to that people.

Ebenezer Kellogg was born in Norwalk, Connecticut, April 5, 1737; was graduated at Yale College in 1757; studied theology under the Rev. David Judson, of Newtown, Connecticut, and was licensed to preach May 28, 1760. He did not make a public profession of religion till he was twenty-one years of age; yet he said, "from my youth, and even from childhood, I have been in the fear of God."

Like many others of his day, he read his sermons without any action. They lacked the refinements of style, and the graces of delivery, which are now more commonly found and more highly valued. But they were serious discourses, carefully setting forth the most important doctrines and duties of religion, and they were so founded on the word of God, that his people were instructed in the way of life.

There is testimony which cannot be quoted here, to his faithful labors in one of the revivals referred to. There is special evidence to his



efforts to promote spirituality in the Church. What characters were formed under such influences, may be seen in some of those who came to manhood in the latter part of this ministry, and who were foremost in the early business and religious activities of Rockville.

There is still one cord unbroken, binding back the present church life of Rockville, to the ministry of that first pastor in Vernon. With his own hand he recorded the last admission to the Church during his lifetime; — “Anno Domini 1817, May 25, Eliza, wife of George Kellogg, recommended by Revd E. Cook, of Orford.” (Now Manchester.)\*

The records of the Ecclesiastical Society, after the completion of the meeting-house, related almost wholly to matters of routine; the choice of officers, the laying of taxes, and, till 1796, when a separate School Society was formed, as required by law, the care and control of the public schools.

In May, 1810, a part of the town of East Windsor was annexed to the Ecclesiastical

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\* ELIZA NOBLE KELLOGG was born at Middletown, Conn., March 7, 1799, and died at Rockville, September 21, 1892.

Society of Vernon. This tract was bounded on the West by a line drawn from the Southwest corner of the town of Ellington, to a point in the then South line of East Windsor. It was one mile in width at the North end, and a little wider at the South end, and included most of the present village of Oakland, now in the town of Manchester. After the adoption of the State Constitution, in 1818, all Society lines were practically obliterated. But this territory continued to be a part of the Vernon School Society, until 1831.

The second pastor of the Church in Vernon was the Rev. William Ely; a native of Saybrook, Connecticut, a graduate of Yale College in 1813, and of Andover Theological Seminary in 1817. He came to Vernon directly from the Seminary, and first preached there September 28, 1817. He received a call from the Church on the 4th of December, but was not ordained until the 11th of March, 1818. The Church increased in numbers during his brief ministry, fifty persons being received by profession. In a biographical sketch of Mr. Ely by the Rev. Dr. Calhoun, it is said of him,

“he was particularly interesting and profitable to the young, and the youths of Vernon received his special attention.” He is held in grateful remembrance, as having established the Sabbath School in Vernon, in May, 1818; one of the earliest in Tolland County. This School had marked success under his care as Superintendent. It was for many years maintained only in the summer season, and included in its membership only such as were called “children,” perhaps all of them under the age of fifteen years. The early methods of conducting a Sabbath School, and its relations to the Church, were very different from those now common. Soon after the close of Mr. Ely’s ministry, a Sabbath School Society was formed, which chose the officers of the School, appointed persons to solicit and enroll pupils, and provided for the expenses. This oversight and responsibility were at length assumed by the Church, by general consent, and almost informally. But for forty years, or more, after the Sabbath School was founded, there is not a single reference to it in the Church records.

Mr. Ely was dismissed February 21, 1822.

He was afterwards, for about fifteen years, pastor of the church in North Mansfield. He died in Worcester, Massachusetts, November 2, 1850, aged 58 years.

After a vacancy in the pastoral office of more than two years, the Church voted, on the 19th of May, 1824, "to give the Revd. Amzi Benedict a call to settle with this Church, as their pastor." The call was accepted, and Mr. Benedict was installed on the 30th of June, 1824.

The principal event connected with this ministry was the building of a new meeting-house, which was dedicated April 4, 1827. This is the house of public worship now standing at Vernon Centre, having been moved a short distance from its original site, changed in the structure of its front and steeple, and remodeled in the interior.

Mr. Benedict was dismissed, at his own request, on the 10th of February, 1830. He continued in the work of the ministry, except when he was for a while engaged in teaching, until he died, in Brooklyn, New York, November 17, 1856, aged 65 years. His death resulted from a railway accident.



On the 22d of September, 1830, the Church in Vernon invited the Rev. David L. Hunn, who had been preaching there since July, to become their pastor. He did not accept the call, but continued to preach as stated supply, until the close of March, 1832.

A revival of religion was in progress when he began to preach there, which continued through that and the following year. This was an era of remarkable revivals. The characteristic means used for promoting them was the "protracted meeting," usually continued for four days, in which the minister was assisted by neighboring pastors, and other preachers. Such a meeting was held in Vernon, commencing on the 6th of September, 1831. Of this meeting, the Rev. Mr. Hunn said, in a published account of the revival, that "it was in all respects the most interesting and efficient meeting of the kind that has been held in this region." More than 80 persons united with the Church upon profession, during the years 1831 and 1832; a much larger number than in any corresponding period of the Church's history.

The fourth pastor of the Church was the Reverend Chester Humphrey, who was ordained October 4, 1832. The Church continued to increase in numbers. In the five years before another church was formed, it received to its membership more than eighty persons; in nearly equal numbers by profession and by letter. Many of these, as of those received after the revivals of 1830 and 1831, were living in the North part of the town. The growing industries there brought hither many professed Christians, who became members of the church in Vernon. They brought hither many others, chiefly persons in early life, who came under the prevailing religious influences of the place. Attendance upon the Sabbath worship at Vernon was expected, and was as general as could be secured from such a distance, of two and a half to three miles. (One of the distinct recollections of my childhood, is that of the large number of men from this part of the town who used to pass my father's house, every Sunday, on foot, in going to meeting at the Centre and returning. One man, for a time, made the journey on such a

lowly beast as some of the ancient prophets rode. But the most noticeable sight of the day was the large team wagon of the Rock Company, with four horses driven by John Chapman, Junior, full loaded with girls from the Rock Factory.) There were many local religious meetings, and the daily presence of Christian example. And thus about one-fourth of all the additions to the Church in Vernon, for the seven years preceding the formation of the Second Church, were from that part of the town which became the especial care of the new church. This district was of much narrower limits than the present city of Rockville. All but one or two of the sixty families enumerated here in 1836 lived on a tract but half a mile in width, on the Northern border of the town. Hardly ten of these were on the South side of the river. The fact should be noticed, that only *six* of the thirty-five members who were dismissed from Vernon, in 1837, to found the new church, were received at Vernon before 1830. Clearly, the providence and the grace of God were alike preparing the way for a living church on this ground.

The measures taken to form a Second Church and Society in Vernon were fully described in the Historical Discourse already referred to. There was no occasion for action by the original Ecclesiastical Society. Those of its members who proposed to form a new Society, withdrew from the old Society, individually, in the manner provided by law.

The subject was first presented to the Church in Vernon, at a meeting held on the 11th of November, 1836, when, as appears by the record, "a petition was made by several members residing in the northern part of the town, for permission to meet and enjoy the ordinances of the gospel by themselves, during the ensuing season." A committee was appointed, to consider this petition, and report at a future meeting. This committee consisted of the pastor, and Deacon Flavel Talcott, Messrs. Thomas Wright Kellogg, John Chapman and George Kellogg. At a meeting held one week later, "the committee reported in favor of granting the petition. The report was accepted, and a motion carried to grant the petition."

There was no occasion for further action by the Vernon Church, until the preparations for forming a new church were nearly completed. Those of the Vernon members who were engaged in this work, then presented a request that their covenant relations with the Church in Vernon might be dissolved. The record shows, that at a meeting of that Church, held October 2, 1837, "a vote was passed to dismiss the following persons, agreeably to their request, with a view to their being organized into a Church." This is followed by the names of the thirty-five members who were thus dismissed.

The Church in Vernon, by this act, parted with about one-sixth of its resident members, and with no small part of its working force. Yet the work undertaken by those who went forth for this high purpose was so evidently one to which they were called of God, by His providences, that they were, in the prayers of their remaining brethren, recommended to the grace of God, for the work to be fulfilled.

The whole work accomplished by the Church during this period cannot be suffi-



ciently understood from its records, nor from considering its whole influence within this town. The impulse of migration, strong from the first, carried away from the town one-half of its seven hundred members, and scattered them in nearly every Northern State this side of the Mississippi. Of a goodly number of all these, it is distinctly known that they answered the call of duty, in founding and sustaining other churches, and that as godly men and women, they upheld the honor of the Christian name.

Seven of the early members became preachers of the Gospel; Salmon G. King, Allen McLean, Francis King, Joel Talcott, Eliot Palmer, Cyril Pearl and Lavalette Perrin. All but one of these were natives of Vernon; all were children of members of the Church there, were baptized by the first pastor, were there taught the way of life, and there professed their faith in Christ. All left the place in early manhood, and labored long and faithfully in the Christian ministry, except Francis King, who preached for several years, and then used the office of a deacon well in his native town.

Two others should be named, children of the church, and there instructed, but providentially led to profess Christ elsewhere; Ebenezer Kellogg, a grandson of the first pastor, for nearly thirty years a professor in Williams College, preaching also in the early years, as his health permitted, whose voice was sometimes heard in the church in which he was baptized. Also an early missionary, Lauren Andrews. His life work was in the Sandwich Islands, where he was for forty years useful as a missionary, the author of a grammar and a dictionary of the language, and as Judge under the Hawaiian Government.

And thus, by the dispersion of its members, and of the preachers it had reared, that church in Vernon scattered abroad the godly influences it had graciously received; so that it may well be said, its line hath gone out through the earth.

The present Church at Vernon Centre was dedicated on the 4th of April, 1827. The following "Order of Exercises" for the occasion is reprinted from a copy received from Mrs. Pearl, of Vernon Centre; perhaps the only copy that has been preserved.

The sermon was preached by the Reverend Amzi Benedict, the pastor of the Church, from Genesis xxviii. 17: "And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Mr. Benedict also offered the Dedicatory Prayer, which is to this day remembered as being peculiarly solemn and impressive, "as if he were talking face to face with God."

The music for the occasion was under the direction of Mr. Salmon Phelps, of East Hartford. The choir was a large one, and had been under his instruction through the winter. The music for the selections from the Psalms was doubtless that of English composers, who took the words from the Psalter, rather than from our common version of the Scriptures.

ORDER OF EXERCISES  
AT THE  
DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH  
IN VERNON,

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4TH, 1827.

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Invocation and Reading the Scriptures.

CHORUS.—

O, praise God in his holiness,  
Praise him in the firmament of his power;  
Praise him in his noble acts,  
Praise him according to his excellent greatness;  
Praise him in the sound of the trumpet.  
Praise him upon the lute and harp;  
Praise him in the cymbals and dances,  
Praise him on strings and pipes;  
Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.

Prayer.

OLD HUNDRED.

Great God, we to thy honor raise  
These walls to echo forth thy praise;  
Do thou, descending, fill the place  
With choicest tokens of thy grace.

Here let the great Redeemer reign,  
With all the graces of his train,  
While power divine his word attends,  
To conquer foes and cheer his friends.

And, in the great decisive day,  
When God the nations shall survey,  
May it before the world appear,  
That crowds were born to glory here.

RECITATIVE.—One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require.

CHORUS.—That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life: to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit his temple. Amen.

### Sermon.

CHORUS.—I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of the Lord, for there is the seat of judgment, even the seat of the house of David. O pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces. I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the house of the Lord. Amen.

### Concluding Prayer.

GENEVA.

In God's own house pronounce his praise;  
His grace he there reveals;  
To heaven your joy and wonder raise,  
For there his glory dwells.

Let all your sacred passions move,  
While you rehearse his deeds;  
But the great work of saving love  
Your highest praise exceeds.

All that hath motion, life and breath,  
Proclaims your Maker blest;  
Yet when my voice expires in death,  
My soul shall praise him best.

CHORUS.—Hallelujah to the God of Israel. He will save us in the day of fight. Hallelujah, the Lord is our defender; he will save us in the day of fight. God is great in battle, for he is the Lord of hosts. Hallelujah, he is our refuge, I will praise him for evermore.

Benediction.



















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